

The Early Storm

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1. Prologue

****The Early Storm ****

Prologue

Somewhere, a long time ago in America, after that great war in the east, but before the end of the cold war, there was a small room in Washington DC, inside one of the several government buildings in said city (it is not important which one). This small room would be of little note to observers such as ourselves: all the room had was a desk with a phone and some papers, a computer, a chair, and some various common items such as pens, and an American flag.

Yet, this room lacked a window, this room, for being small, was still important enough to be kept out of the public eye. Indeed, this room was nestled deep inside its structure, and not listed in most files. The room in question had three shifts, each manned by a highly trusted federal agent (again, the agency is not important here). While in theory, these men were supposed to be on alert, in practice, the constant lack of action in this job meant a high turnover rate, and little attention paid, this room, you see, was a special crisis contact room, for some obscure ex missile silo, turned research facility, named Black Mesa. While most people know what happened some few decades after this time, when Black Mesa was a bustling, and important research facility, and the site of the largest resonance cascade, a much smaller incident in the early days, put this facility in the minds of many important... entities, both within, and without America, and the universe itself.

And this room, of little importance to anyone, would at this day, at this hour, become the most important room on earth, when the secure phone line which was fused with the desk, rang for the first time in

a long time.

2. Chapter I

Chapter I

"Department of Defense." Agent McCord tried to introduce on the phone line.

"Calm down sir." Tell me.. No, I mean sir try and calm down what? Wait, what?!" McCord sat up and listened intently as the voice on the other side was desperate to say everything he could.

"What do you mean Protocol-"

McCord, feeling now ashamed for not being able to remember some simple task in this simple job, quickly shuffled around the cabinets of the desk, pulling out over a dozen manila folders on the desk, and quickly shuffling around for one labeled "Protocol F-2".

Finally, after a desperate fumbling, the agent opened up the folder, and a single sheet of paper fell out, the content of this paper included all sorts of complex contact information, but the only real full sentence was at the top, the document said:

"Please contact the Department of Defense immediately"

Agent McCord then picked up the other phone on his desk, this one with a dialing feature, and immediately put the other phone up to his free ear.

"This is Agent McCord from the Special Research Coordination Office, a Doctor Rosenberg of the _Black Mesa Research Facility_ has activated protocol F-2"

The voice on the other end spoke in an authoritative tone, that also likely concealed a complete disbelief:

"Understood, keep in contact with the facility, and advise on proper safety procedures while the information is delivered to the security coordination team at the Pentagon"

"Understood." McCord hung up the other phone, and then returned his attention to the other phone, "Hello, Doctor Rosenberg?"

But no one replied.

3. Chapter II

Chapter II

Now, inside the Pentagon in Washington DC, there *was* another small secret room, although this one was not particularly hidden in some highly secure physical location. The actual description of the room on the placard was "Maintenance Room," but in reality, inside was a small collection of four Army and Marine Corps officials, sitting around a table, and outfitted with various electric and electronic

equipment such as secure phones, and special TV screens.

The room was commanded over by a Colonel Booth. Booth came from a long line of American military servicemen dating back to the war of 1812. Booth was educated at the US Military Academy, and was a New England native. He served honorably in Korea and the (then) recently concluded Vietnam war, and was considered a good military leader, yet a fair human being. However, after offending some important people in the military, he was given this dead end, practically "useless" and "stupid" post as an unofficial punishment. Next came two Lieutenants: One of them was a Lieutenant Burke, another New England native. Burke had a background with prominent English heritage New England family, and joined the military purely to bring more "honor" to the family name. Having powerful political connections, Burke was able to land himself this completely non-combat and non-event (thus far!) post after graduating at the bottom of his class at the US Naval Academy.

The other two personnel were both from outside New England. The other Lieutenant, a Lieutenant Freeman, became an officer via ROTC, after completing his studies in Electrical Engineering. Lieutenant Freeman lived in Portland Oregon, and having not been a particularly good officer, and having an engineering background, he was offered the post at this newly created department. The final man in the room was a NCO, a Staff Sergeant Williamson. Williamson was the consultant on practical combat affairs. He had joined the army during the Vietnam war, and fought in several engagements, before being put in this position after a botched operation which led to a special deal with the government. Williamson and Booth were the only two serious warriors in the room.

Everyone in the room, even the hardened Booth, largely spent time doing nothing of note. Activities ranged from debating recent political issues around the table, to watching television, to reading. Every night all but one of them would leave, and go back to their normal (military) lives. Usually it was either NCO Williamson, or the depressed Colonel Booth who got the night post, occasionally Lieutenant Freeman would take a night shift as well; No one dared to even bother Burke, lest his father call his contacts in the high command, or in congress.

While all the men where playing a card game, a semi loud, electronic noise blared out of a speaker on the table, while a red light went off on the main phone. Everyone, even the hardened Booth, was caught totally off guard. No one ever bothered to run the scheduled exercises, and in the few cases when the coordination office manned by the agent was contacted, it was usually for equipment related issues. The military office was never contacted. Freeman and Burke had fear shoot through them, Williamson was alarmed but calm. Booth maintained his tough posture, and quickly walked over to the phone, as all the men leaned in:

"This is the Special Research Department Security Coordination teamâ€|"

4. Chapter III

****Chapter III****

"Yes?â€¦.. Ohâ€¦.." Even the hardened Colonel Booth was at a complete loss as to what to really do in any greater sense of the word. Finally, he just decided there was nothing more he could do over the phone right now, and he said he would call them back.

The Colonel fell back into his chair, in a rare moment of not wanting to control every little detail of his body and mind. He put his hand up to his forehead, as all the other men looked at him, finally, after a few moments, Booth spoke up again, but in a quieter and somewhat softer voice than usual:

"Lieutenant Freeman, bring me all the protocol F-2 information and Black Mesa information we have from the filing cabinets."

"Yes sir"

A few moments later, Freeman returned with some documents, and laid them out on the desk. Booth thought it important to first review all the protocols and information again, before contactingâ€¦.. Whoever was to be contacted. For the next hour or so, the men just read through all the information, and finally came up with a rough outline of a "plan," mostly based upon what the documents commanded.

1. Contact higher military leaders
2. Wait for a special support team to arrive
3. When the special support team arrives, begin running reconnaissance on the facility, and use local forces in the area of incident (Police, Sheriff, Fire Department, National Guard, etc) to establish a 10 to 25 mile radius of security around the incident.

After an hour, Booth and the others had a rough plan. The problem was, the protocols were written in an almost insulting manner, telling them basic things they either already knew, or could easily look up, and Booth doubted whoever wrote them expected they would be seriously used. For instance, it gave no really specific instructions, and no special infrastructure really existed in the room, to contact "higher authorities." Finally, Booth just stood up, and said "Give me a few minutes." Colonel Booth began walking down to the office of a important official at the Pentagon (it is irrelevant who specifically it was). As the official was not there, Booth left a message, and then returned back to the "command room."

Sometime later within the day, a representative on behalf of the official knocked on the door. He was quickly ushered into the room, and Colonel Booth shook the hand of the man and greeted him, as he was wearing a business suit, and not military clothing, so he did not know if he was military or not.

The man flashed his Department of Defense, civilian employee badge, and then asked in a sharp, but not very loud voice "what happened?"

"A couple of hours ago, we received a call from the Special Research Coordination Office, than an F-2 incident has occurred at the Black Mesa facility in rural New Mexico."

"What the hell is an F-2 incident?"

"According to those files, an F-2 incident is a penetration of the facility by unknown and/or hostile forces."

"Can I please see some proof here?" asking in a voice that was almost meant to insult the entire crew, and this entire office, as if this was all some kind of grand joke."

Booth led the man over to a recording device, and replayed the phone call and other transmissions that may have come through.

In a much more serious voice, that was very business like, and sounding like he almost felt ashamed for ever insulting the crew, just said "I'll be back."

5. Chapter IV

Chapter IV

A few hours after the civilian employee had left, another knock was heard at the door. Williamson, sitting closest to the door opened it, and outside was a spectacle to behold: everyone from CIA agents, to civilian employees, to high ranking officers, and all sorts of officials stood cramped in the hallway. Finally, the most imposing of them, standing well over 6 feet tall, stepped forward:

"I am Lieutenant General Weissmann, and I will be taking over this operation."

Colonel Booth just nodded, at this point, nobody bothered at all with military etiquette, considering the extraordinary, and unexpected nature of what was happening today.

The Lieutenant General motioned for everyone to follow him, and a mass of men followed him down the hallways. Passing through the building for god knows how long, and passing through multiple high security checkpoints, before finally reaching some sort of special command room.

The command room itself was some sort of special, rarely used room. Yet today it was running fully: the room was around 80 meters by 40, and had a ceiling that reached up to 5 meters high, with TV screens and other devices hanging down in special bunches. On the sides of the room stood several computer/information terminals, manned by various types of people, whose job it was to make contacts, and relay information. In the center of the room was a large desk with a special seat reserved up front.

"Sit" the general ordered. As the seats were labeled as to whom should sit where, Booth eventually found a space. Almost right next to the general. Finally, when everyone was seated, the general spoke up:

"Gentlemen, I have assembled you here all today for an event of extraordinary magnitude.

About ten hours ago, the Special Research Coordination Office received an emergency call from a Doctor Rosenberg, at Black Mesa Research Facility in New Mexico."

All of the officials just looked on, finally one of the civilians asked bluntly: "Black Mesa?"

"Yes, I think I will let Colonel Booth explain this situation."

Booth was caught off guard, he quickly prepared a mental response, and he decided that he would be honest as to his whole department, and take this rare chance to convince important people, that he was essentially neglected. Booth rose and began speaking:

"Well, Mrâ€¦"

"O'Brian"

"Yes Mr O'Brian, you see, about a few years back, when we were trying to show the Soviets we were on their good side, with that policy of DÃ©tente, we shut down an old, missile complex in New Mexico. However, instead of just letting the facility rot away, some scientists approached the President, and he absent mindedly signed several secret executive orders founding an office for "special" research projects, and allocated a few million dollars. Now, at this point in time, we have no specific information on what *exactly* they were working on. Their "research" program only got through because they had good timing, and good connections. Our department is supposed to (in theory) handle any situations that come up, but we have no one under our command, and we have little authority to do anything."

The men at the table all listened intently, until finally another civilian spoke up in an abrupt manner: "What happened?"

"Well, Doctor Rosenberg said it was a protocol F-2 situation, meaning the facility is being penetrated by hostile or unknown â€¦ forces. However, that is all we were able to get out of him, as the communications with the facility were cut."

"Wellâ€¦. What do we do?"

The general butted in, "We will all debate a course of action, but I will have the final word. With that all said, I appoint Colonel Booth second in command of this situation, as he seems the most informed of us right now."

"Thank you Lieutenant General sirâ€¦ about that planâ€¦.. We actually do have a planâ€¦. Sort of. The files say the absolute first thing we need to do is to contact the local authorities, and get them to set up a perimeter, and then we will need to do reconnaissance on the area to determine the nature of the situation."

The staff all nodded in agreement, finally the general ordered that these things get done. Over the course of the next two hours, spy satellites were being repositioned, and special reconnaissance flights were ordered flown over the facility. Meanwhile the local police, and the closest FBI office were contacted, and were told to cordon off the area for "special reasons." Meanwhile, the staff began debating the next step of the operation: What military unit should be sent in to investigateâ€¦.

End
file.